

EACC Gala Speech – Board President, Antonio Pagano

Good evening, everyone,

Welcome to this exceptional evening—a beautiful venue, a remarkable audience, and such distinguished guests and authorities with us tonight. Especially in times like these—marked by uncertainty and geopolitical tension—having you all here is truly special. I look forward to hearing from our honored speakers shortly.

This is my first year serving as Board President. For those who know me well, you know the past few years have been quite a journey—personally and professionally. Through it all, the EACC has been a constant for me. A safe harbor. A place filled with sharp minds, great peers, and, above all, real value.

And that’s what I want to talk about tonight: **value**.

My mission as President is clear—to ensure every member gets value from being part of this community. Let me share how we’re working to deliver that.

Together with our leadership team, we’ve built a program around two core pillars—two topics that will shape the transatlantic business environment for years to come: **Workforce** and **Automation**. These themes are not only timely but will remain relevant even after I pass the baton to our Vice Chair, Fabian Schmahl.

We kicked off the year with our “Automate” event, and this summer we’ll dive into workforce challenges with a dedicated conference. These two focus areas will now be recurring annual events, in addition to our flagship gatherings, **Sustain** and **Transform**.

Another exciting initiative we’ve relaunched is our **Young Professionals (YP) Committee**. I believe deeply in this program—not only because it creates a space for young talent across our member companies to connect and thrive—but because it also serves as a fantastic recruiting tool. Companies that may not yet see the immediate value of the EACC will see how initiatives like this benefit their future leaders.

This is in addition to our ongoing programming: Stammtisch, operations showcases, CXO roundtables, the Gala itself, Beaujolais Nouveau, and more. Each event is a chance to connect, learn, and grow together.

But tonight, I'm also excited to share something new.

We've heard your feedback - especially the desire for a forum to raise concerns and bring them to the attention of policy makers. Now, let me be clear: the EACC is a non-governmental, non-lobbying organization, as set out in our bylaws. But that doesn't mean we can't advocate for our members when important issues arise.

That's why we've created the **EACC Advocacy Committee**, led by Kai Bitter, together with David Kay, Nicole Fenyo, and myself. The mission is simple: to gather your concerns and, when appropriate, bring them to the legislative level - even all the way to Washington, D.C., if needed.

We'll focus on topics that matter to all of us - workforce, immigration, incentives, and yes, even tariffs. You'll receive more info from Nicole soon, and our first meeting will be in June. I strongly encourage you to get involved. The impact of this initiative will depend entirely on your engagement.

We believe there are several ways for our member companies to participate: we will engage directly with government officials by sharing our stories and inviting legislators to visit our facilities; we need individuals willing to be interviewed by the media; and we intend to attend events in Frankfort and Columbus as well as Washington, D.C. - the latter ideally in coordination with other EACC chapters.

And one more promise kept:

We've opened a new EACC Chapter in Italy.

I announced this goal at last year's Gala, and I'm proud to say it's now a reality. A big thank-you to **EACC Cincinnati**, who supported the launch, and to **Nicole**, who did an outstanding job making it happen. If you're an Italian member or a U.S.-based company doing business in Italy, please reach out—we want you to be part of it.

Before I close, a few well-deserved thank-yous:

To **our Vice Chair, Fabian Schmahl**, thank you for your constant support and collaboration.

And to **Nicole and Claudia**—you are simply incredible. The energy, professionalism, and results you deliver—just the two of you—is beyond impressive. Thank you for making this all possible.

Thanks again to all of you for being here tonight.